



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Mild irritation, inflammation, erosion or infection of the stomach lining. The illness may be acute, occurring as a sudden attack, or chronic, developing gradually over a long period of time. Gastritis is part of a spectrum of diseases that include gastric erosion and gastric ulcer.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Abdominal pain and cramps.
- Black stool due to gastrointestinal bleeding.
- Vomiting (occasionally).
- Appetite loss.
- Fever.
- Weakness.
- Swollen abdomen.
- Sharp, dull or annoying pain in the chest.
- Acid taste in the mouth.
- Mild nausea and diarrhea (rare).
- Belching or gas.

CAUSES

- Excess stomach acid caused by heavy drinking, smoking or overeating (especially foods that are not digested easily).
- Bacterial infection.
- Virus infection. This form may be contagious.
- Adverse reaction to alcohol, caffeine or drugs.
- Unknown (sometimes).

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Stress, including surgery and hospitalization for other problems.
- Improper diet.
- Illness that has lowered resistance.
- Smoking.
- Use of drugs, such as aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories, cortisone, caffeine, and many more.
- Excess alcohol consumption.
- Fatigue or overwork.
- The presence of a bacteria, *Helicobacter pylori*, in the stomach.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Eat and drink moderately.
- Don't skip meals or eat irregularly.
- Avoid foods you find hard to digest.
- Don't smoke.
- Avoid medicines that irritate your stomach, if possible.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Usually curable in several days if the cause is eliminated.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Bleeding is an uncommon but dangerous complication, especially in the elderly.



TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Diagnosis is made by examining the stomach through a gastroscope (a viewing tube passed down the esophagus to the stomach). A small amount of tissue may be removed for a biopsy.
- Goals of treatment are to relieve the symptoms and eliminate the gastric irritant or other cause.
- Stop smoking.
- Hospitalization may be required if excessive bleeding occurs.

MEDICATIONS

- For minor discomfort, you may use non-prescription antacids or acetaminophen. Don't use aspirin.
- Other medications such as ulcer-healing drugs may be prescribed.

ACTIVITY

Resume normal activities as soon as symptoms improve.

DIET

Don't eat solid food on the first day of the attack. Drink liquids frequently, preferably milk or water. Resume a normal diet slowly, but avoid hot and spicy foods, alcohol, coffee and acidic foods until symptoms disappear.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of gastritis.
- You vomit blood.
- Bowel movements become black or tarry.
- Pain becomes severe.
- Signs of dehydration, such as a dry mouth, wrinkled skin, excess thirst or decreased urination, develop.